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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae>

### **UNITED STATES ATTORNEY AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY ANNOUNCE UPCOMING PROGRAM IN MODESTO FOCUSED ON PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ONLINE EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE**

FRESNO - United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott and Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that on March 22, 2007, representatives of the United States Attorney's Office, the Stanislaus County District Attorney's Office, the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department, and the Modesto Police Department will be in Stanislaus County to present a program to students, parents, educators, and community members about safe internet use and how to help protect children from online exploitation and abuse.

The evening event will include a two-hour-long program for all area junior high and high school-age students, parents, educators, and community members. The United States Attorney, District Attorney, Modesto Police Chief and Stanislaus County Sheriff will speak. In addition, Stanislaus County detectives from the Sacramento Valley Hi-Tech Crimes Task Force will present a program on how parents can take steps to protect children from dangers to them on the internet. The program will be held at the Martin G. Petersen Event Center, located at 720 12<sup>th</sup> Street, in Modesto, and will be free and open to the public. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m., and the program will be held from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Computer skills are NOT necessary for these presentations! The program is rated PG-13, due to potential content related to the live on-line chat portion of the program.

Those supporting this event include Stanislaus County Office of Education, Stanislaus and Merced County Sheriff's Departments, Sacramento Valley Hi-Tech Crimes Task Force, Modesto, Merced, Ceres, and Turlock Police Departments, Stanislaus County District Attorney's Office, KCRA 3, My58, Univision, Project Safe Childhood, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of California, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, California Coalition for Children's Internet Safety, Sleep Train Mattress Centers, NetSmartz, Web Wise Kids, and iSafe.

The upcoming day of activities is part of Project Safe Childhood, an ongoing national initiative announced last year by U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. Some of the goals of the initiative are integrating federal, state, and local efforts to investigate and prosecute child exploitation cases and to identify and rescue child victims as well as raising community awareness and increasing educational programming about internet safety. Stressing the importance of education about online exploitation and abuse, United States Attorney Scott asked, “We teach our kids how to use the Internet, but do we teach them how to protect themselves?”

Outreach will continue in other communities and school districts throughout California’s Eastern District in an effort to encourage schools to make internet safety programs a part of their curriculum.

For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit the PSC website at [www.projectsafchildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafchildhood.gov) or call the Project Safe Childhood coordinators for the Eastern District of California, Assistant United States Attorney Laurel White, in Sacramento (916-554-2700), or Assistant United States Attorney David Gappa, in Fresno (559-497-4000).

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